

Transition from high school to work

The transition from high school to work can be difficult. Without prior job experience or specialized training, school leavers may have difficulty finding jobs they are willing to take. The employment rate among school leavers, both those who have not finished high school and those who have finished but have not gone on to college, indicates the difficulty of making this transition.

- In 1996, 59 percent of recent high school completers not enrolled in college were employed, compared to 42 percent of recent high school dropouts.
- Between 1989 and 1996, the percentage of recent high school completers not enrolled in college who were employed decreased from 72 to 59 percent. However, between 1989 and 1996, the percentages of recent school dropouts not enrolled in college who were employed remained about the same.
- In 1996, white recent high school completers not enrolled in college were more likely to be employed than their black counterparts.
- White recent high school completers were more likely to be employed than white recent school dropouts in 1996. Likewise, black recent high school completers were more likely to be employed than black recent school dropouts.
- Although the gap in the employment rates of male and female recent high school completers not enrolled in college narrowed between 1960 and 1996, males generally were more likely to be employed than females (see supplemental table 30-1).

Employment rates for recent high school completers not enrolled in college and for recent school dropouts, by race/ethnicity: October 1972–96

October	Recent high school completers not enrolled in college				Recent school dropouts			
	Total ¹	White	Black	Hispanic	Total ¹	White	Black	Hispanic
1972	70.1	73.5	48.3	(²)	46.8	47.0	42.8	(²)
1974	69.1	72.9	46.0	56.2	49.3	53.9	36.2	49.9
1976	68.8	73.1	38.6	65.3	44.8	49.6	20.9	52.7
1978	74.9	79.0	45.8	67.8	51.2	54.2	22.3	56.1
1980	68.9	74.6	34.7	62.3	44.6	51.2	20.9	52.2
1982	60.4	68.4	29.3	56.6	38.0	44.6	16.2	45.5
1984	64.0	70.7	44.8	55.4	44.0	51.4	24.2	41.0
1986	65.2	71.5	41.1	53.7	48.0	50.4	31.5	41.0
1988	71.9	78.2	55.8	53.6	43.6	47.6	17.6	44.7
1989	71.7	77.6	53.7	54.6	46.7	57.6	26.4	42.1
1990	67.8	75.0	45.2	56.3	46.3	56.3	30.9	39.9
1991	59.6	67.0	32.3	57.9	36.8	38.6	24.7	36.2
1992	62.7	71.9	37.0	53.2	36.2	43.1	(³)	41.4
1993	64.2	71.8	42.3	47.7	46.9	52.6	27.1	34.5
1994	64.2	73.1	38.0	43.7	42.9	51.7	34.1	41.2
1995	63.1	71.4	51.5	43.0	47.7	51.6	33.5	43.9
1996	59.0	68.5	41.7	(²)	42.3	45.3	21.5	(²)

¹ Included in the totals but not shown separately are recent high school completers not enrolled in college and recent school dropouts from other racial/ethnic groups.

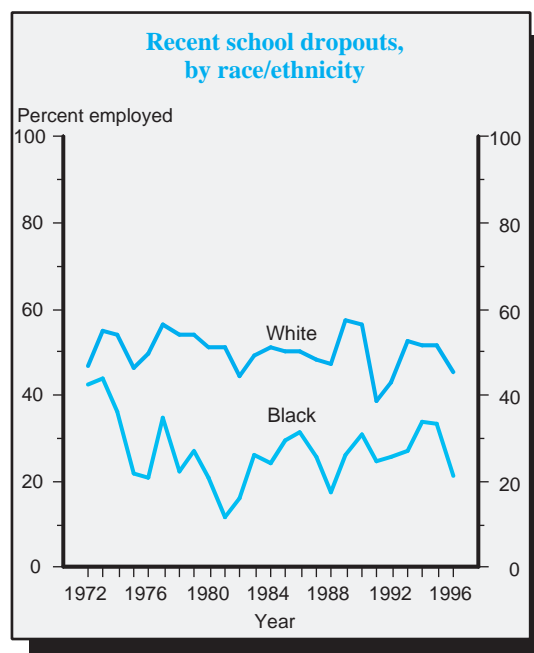
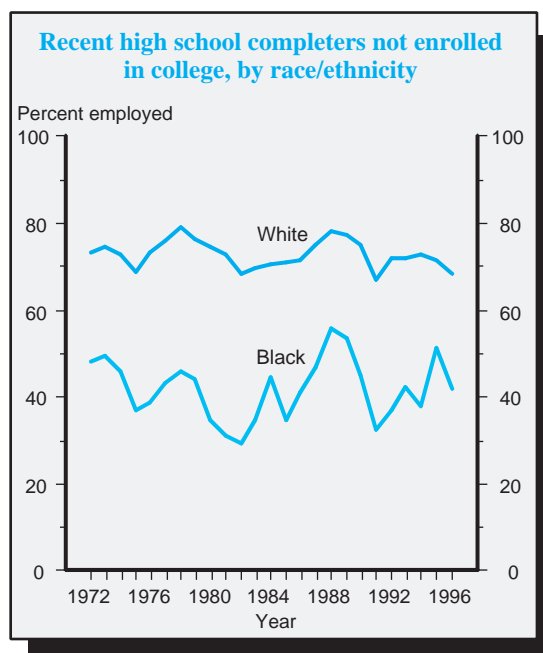
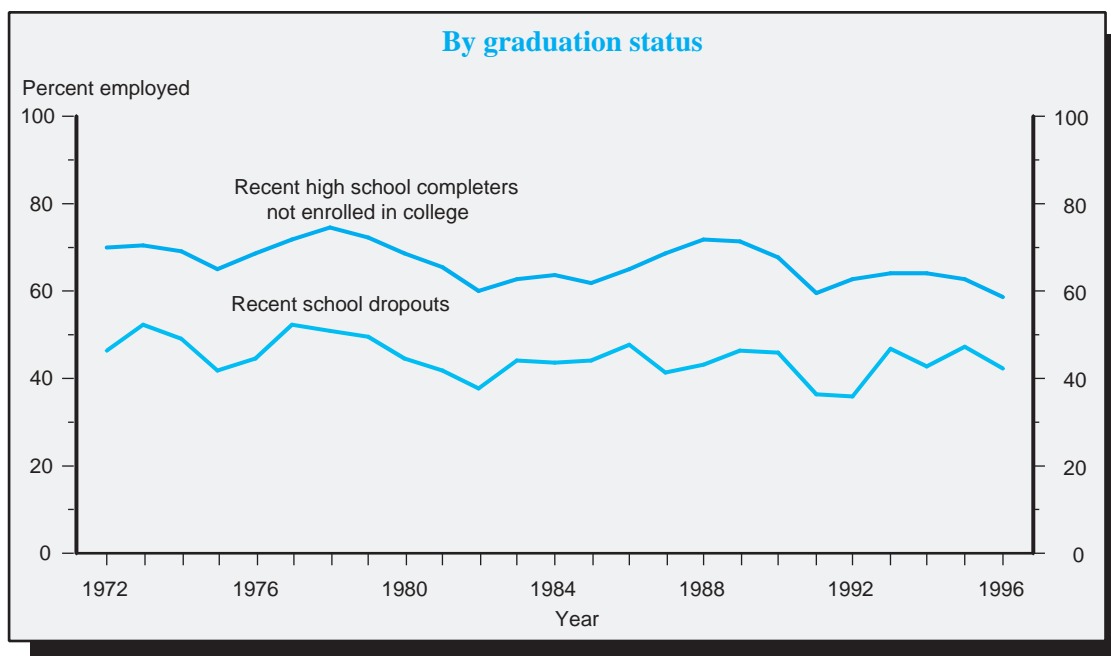
² Due to the small sample sizes for the Hispanic category, 3-year averages were calculated. For example, the 3-year average for 1995 is the average percentage of recent high school completers not enrolled in college or recent school dropouts in 1994, 1995, and 1996. Thus, 3-year averages cannot be calculated for 1972 and 1996.

³ Too few sample observations for a reliable estimate.

NOTE: Recent high school completers are individuals ages 16–24 who completed high school during the survey year. Recent school dropouts are individuals ages 16–24 who did not complete high school, who were not enrolled during the survey month, and who were in school 12 months earlier.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, October Current Population Surveys.

Employment rates for recent high school completers not enrolled in college and for recent school dropouts: October 1972–96



NOTE: Recent high school completers are individuals ages 16–24 who completed high school during the survey year. Recent school dropouts are individuals ages 16–24 who did not complete high school, who were not enrolled during the survey month, and who were in school 12 months earlier. There were too few sample observations for a reliable estimate of black recent school dropouts in 1992.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, October Current Population Surveys.

Table 30-1 Employment rates for recent high school completers not enrolled in college and for recent school dropouts, by sex: October 1960–96

October	Recent high school completers not enrolled in college			Recent school dropouts		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1960	65.0	75.3	58.8	50.9	61.8	40.8
1961	65.4	70.1	62.5	49.4	60.3	38.3
1962	68.3	77.8	61.5	40.4	61.9	23.3
1963	64.7	72.6	59.5	45.1	64.4	27.0
1964	63.4	79.2	53.5	41.6	63.0	24.0
1965	71.9	84.3	63.2	47.9	66.8	26.8
1966	64.9	79.7	55.8	51.4	69.4	33.6
1967	65.9	78.3	57.7	50.3	65.0	34.4
1968	67.3	79.1	60.2	50.0	65.5	34.0
1969	70.1	83.1	61.1	51.0	69.8	30.9
1970	63.2	76.1	52.6	44.7	56.5	31.9
1971	65.1	77.5	55.6	46.8	59.3	31.7
1972	70.1	79.9	62.2	46.8	64.7	28.3
1973	70.7	81.7	61.9	52.7	62.5	40.0
1974	69.1	76.0	63.2	49.3	63.8	32.2
1975	65.1	74.1	57.5	41.9	54.8	29.5
1976	68.8	75.9	61.7	44.8	58.0	28.2
1977	72.0	77.7	67.2	52.7	64.0	39.3
1978	74.9	81.6	67.5	51.2	63.7	34.8
1979	72.4	79.2	66.7	49.7	65.3	34.3
1980	68.9	72.6	65.0	44.6	51.9	34.8
1981	65.9	70.0	62.1	42.1	54.1	29.3
1982	60.4	64.9	56.0	38.0	44.4	30.5
1983	63.0	66.1	60.1	44.4	51.6	35.8
1984	64.0	69.1	59.7	44.0	53.1	33.7
1985	62.0	65.0	59.3	44.2	51.9	35.8
1986	65.2	69.4	61.6	48.0	57.9	36.8
1987	68.9	76.9	61.9	41.8	46.0	36.6
1988	71.9	74.2	69.5	43.6	53.7	30.6
1989	71.7	77.4	65.6	46.7	52.2	40.1
1990	67.8	73.1	61.9	46.3	51.3	40.6
1991	59.6	62.2	56.1	36.8	48.8	25.0
1992	62.7	68.8	55.8	36.2	44.8	28.7
1993	64.2	67.6	60.6	46.9	61.6	30.1
1994	64.2	70.4	57.7	42.9	58.2	27.1
1995	63.1	64.1	62.3	47.7	52.8	41.1
1996	59.0	61.6	55.9	42.3	51.0	34.1

NOTE: Recent high school completers are individuals ages 16–24 who completed high school during the survey year. Recent school dropouts are individuals ages 16–24 who did not complete high school, who were not enrolled during the survey month, and who were in school 12 months earlier.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Force Statistics Derived from the Current Population Survey: 1940–87*. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, October Current Population Surveys.

Table S30 **Standard errors for the text table in *Indicator 30***

October	Recent high school graduates not enrolled in college				Recent school dropouts			
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Total	White	Black	Hispanic
1972	1.7	1.8	5.7	(*)	2.8	3.4	6.4	(*)
1974	1.7	1.8	5.8	5.5	2.7	3.2	5.6	5.2
1976	1.7	1.8	5.8	4.9	2.8	3.2	5.5	5.2
1978	1.6	1.7	5.6	4.5	2.7	3.3	5.1	5.3
1980	1.8	1.8	5.2	4.9	2.8	3.5	5.5	4.8
1982	2.0	2.1	4.7	5.1	3.1	3.8	5.4	5.2
1984	2.1	2.3	5.0	5.1	3.3	4.1	6.9	4.9
1986	2.1	2.3	5.1	5.2	3.4	4.5	8.6	5.1
1988	2.4	2.6	6.1	6.2	3.7	4.7	6.8	6.8
1989	2.5	2.7	7.1	6.8	4.1	5.3	7.4	6.5
1990	2.5	2.8	6.4	6.1	4.1	5.3	8.7	6.2
1991	2.8	3.2	6.2	5.9	4.1	5.5	7.6	5.9
1992	2.7	3.0	6.1	5.9	4.0	5.3	—	6.2
1993	2.7	3.0	7.2	5.6	4.1	5.2	8.6	5.4
1994	2.4	2.7	6.3	4.9	3.5	4.7	7.7	4.6
1995	2.4	2.8	6.2	4.6	3.2	4.4	7.5	4.3
1996	2.5	3.0	6.0	(*)	3.5	4.8	6.4	(*)

— Not available.

* Not applicable.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, October Current Population Surveys.